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Kangana row: Farmer outfits back woman constable



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Europe no longer a continent of peace, says Zelenskyy
 Ukrainian President tells French parliament cities being destroyed and villages burned



SPORT | PAGE 08

World Cup: England to face formidable Aussies

In a nutshell

4 Indian students drown in Russia
NEW DELHI: Four Indian students, who were studying at a university in Russia's Veliky Novgorod region, drowned in the Volkhov river, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. A fifth Indian student was saved and is receiving medical attention, it said, adding that two students are missing and a search for them is on. Local emergency services have so far recovered two bodies from the Volkhov river. PTI

3 try to enter Parliament using fake IDs
NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police have launched a probe after three men were nabbed for entering a highly secure Parliament on forged Aadhaar cards. The incident occurred on June 4 and the three were identified as Kasim, Monis and Soyeb. According to the FIR, the CISF official deployed at Parliament House, detected Kasim, Monis and Soyeb, all residents of UP, while they were trying to get entry on Casual entry pass. IANS

RBI keeps interest rates unchanged
MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its key interest rates unchanged on Friday as expected, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth that is likely to provide the new Modi government headroom for manoeuvring reforms. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for an eighth straight policy meeting, Governor Shaktikanta Das said. (NATION PAGE 5)

7 naxals killed in encounter
NARAYANPUR: Seven naxalites were killed and three jawans injured in an encounter in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Friday, police said. The gunfight took place around 3pm in a forest near Gobel and Thulthuli villages in Orcha, where a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-naxalite operation. With this incident, 125 naxalites have been killed in the State so far this year. PTI

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Childhood dream comes true
 Anya Riley says main challenge for voicing Riley was to get kid's voice

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Modi elected leader of NDA

Murmu appoints him PM-designate; to take oath at 7.15 pm tomorrow

PTI
 NEW DELHI

Key BJP allies — TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar — on Friday endorsed Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi as the leader of the NDA with a message to balance regional aspirations and national interests.

Speaking at the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting here, BJP allies JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy, Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, NCP chief Ajit Pawar and HAM(S) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, among others, supported the proposal moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to elect Modi as the leader of the NDA.

Modi said he would strive to ensure unanimity in running the next government and asserted that the NDA is not a combine of some parties to get power but an organic alliance committed to the principle of 'nation first'.

Chosen by the BJP-led NDA as its leader to become Prime Minister for the third time, Modi said the ruling combine is committed to the constitutional principle of 'sarva panth sambhava' (interfaith har-



BJP president JP Nadda welcomes Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi during the NDA parliamentary party meeting at Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi on Friday. — Photo: PTI

mony) and mutual trust was at the core of this bloc. Modi will take oath as PM for a third consecutive term on Sunday evening as President Droupadi Murmu has invited him to form the government. Murmu appointed him as the Prime Minister-designate after BJP chief JP Nadda handed her a letter on Modi's election as the leader of the BJP Parliamentary Party and NDA leaders submitted their letters of support. The President will administer the oath of office and secrecy at 7.15 pm on Sunday at Rashtrapati Bhavan. (RELATED REPORTS PAGE 5)

'Right leader at right time'

NEW DELHI: Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N Chandrababu Naidu said Narendra Modi is the "right leader at the right time" for India as he affirmed TDP's support to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Friday. Naidu also proposed the name of Modi for the post of Prime Minister, highlighting his vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Viksit Bharat, and urged to never miss the "good opportunity for India".

"The NDA government under the leadership of PM Modi has taken initiatives in the last 10 years. Modi has a vision and zeal, his execution is very perfect. He is executing all his policies with a true spirit. Today, India has the right leader at the right time, and that is Narendra Modi. This is a very good opportunity for India. If you miss it now, we will miss forever. That is where we are having a wonderful opportunity," Naidu said while addressing the NDA MPs meeting. "Now, I proudly propose the name of Narendra Modi ji on behalf of the Telugu Desam Party for the post of Prime Minister of this great nation. Through his vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Viksit Bharat and through the collective efforts of the NDA, we can become a zero poverty nation that is possible only through Narendra Modi," he added. He also invoked former Andhra Chief Minister late NT Rama Rao's vision of humanism, comparing it with Modi's vision. "My leader and party founder, NT Rama Rao, has always worked hard for the people and also said clearly that I don't know isms — I know one, humanism. Modi ji is making that a reality for India," ANI

JD(U) EYES RAILWAY MINISTRY, SPECIAL STATUS FOR BIHAR

NEW DELHI: Prior to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) meeting on Friday, JD(U) MPs, led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, held a meeting in the national capital, during which the party reiterated its full support for the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre. The JD(U)'s meeting was significant as key issues such as government formation and the Central Cabinet were discussed. Former MP Anand Mohan, MP Lalain Singh and other senior JD(U) leaders were present at the deliberations.

Before the meeting, the JD(U) MPs reiterated their demand for the Ministry of Railways as Nitish Kumar was the Railway Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. However, the JD(U) has not issued any official statements regarding Cabinet positions and portfolios as yet.

MP Lalain Singh, known to be close to Nitish Kumar, mentioned that the structure of the Cabinet was the prerogative of the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, some MPs also demanded Special Category Status for Bihar during the meeting. While many JD(U) MPs arrived in Delhi on Thursday, Nitish Kumar has been in Delhi since June 5 for the NDA meeting. Notably, various statements from JD(U) leaders have emerged during this period. Party spokesperson, KC Tyagi reiterated the demand for Special Category Status for Bihar and commented on the Agnipath scheme, noting that a section of voters was unhappy with it.

Regarding the Uniform Civil Code, he stated that as national president of the party, the Chief Minister had written to the Law Commission, emphasising that all stakeholders should be consulted for a solution. IANS

Freeze on funds leaves local bodies in lurch

STATE BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Gram panchayats across Telangana are grappling with severe financial difficulties due to the non-release of funds by the State government for the past six months.

This funding freeze has left many village administrations struggling to manage basic services and operations. Of the nearly Rs 1,380 crore pending for payment to the gram panchayats, the State government is learnt to have released only Rs 160 crore in two spells over the last six months.

During the previous BRS regime, around Rs 230 crore was released every month to 12,769 gram panchayats across the State. The State government released matching grants along with Central funds. These funds supported various rural development initiatives, including garbage collection, road maintenance and the operations of dumpyards.

The previous government also appointed a Panchayat Secretary for each village under the new Panchayat Raj Act, which aimed to make gram pan-

Of Rs 1,380 crore pending to gram panchayats, TS govt has released only Rs 160 cr in two spells over last six months

chayats a model for the country. Due to these initiatives, the rural local bodies of Telangana won numerous awards from the Centre under various categories/schemes over the last three-four years.

However, the current government has significantly cut these monthly allocations. Panchayat officials are under pressure to cover emergency expenses from their own pockets, adding to their financial strain. The situation has worsened with the expiry of the rural local bodies' term in February this year, following which the administration is being handled by the special officers appointed by the State government. The situation is especially dire for smaller gram panchayats, where the lack of funds has halted essential services. (SEE PAGE 2)

Row over NEET scores deepens

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-2024), the single-level national examination taken by over 23 lakh students from across the country this year, has run into rough weather. MBBS aspirants, parents, edu-influencers and training institutions have raised concerns over the way the ranks were issued, with some even demanding that the prestigious examination be re-conducted.

This year, the National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts NEET, released the results of NEET-2024 medical entrance test on Tuesday (June 4).

Within 24 hours, students and parents started reporting major discrepancies over the way the marks, results and ranks were finalised.

For the first time, record 66 candidates secured first rank, i.e. they scored the maximum of 720 marks, in NEET-2024. Rather

strangely, of the 66 candidates, about six were from a single examination centre, which has left a large number of aspirants in disbelief.

Experts tracking NEET results for the past several years have said every year, there are three to four top-pers and the probability of 66 candidates securing 100 per cent marks in just one year is highly unlikely.

"The NEET-2024 examination was not easy and it is impossible that a total of 66 students at one go will be able to secure the first rank by scoring 100 per cent marks. There is a definite error in the marking system, which has to be clarified by the NTA so that a clear picture emerges," Alakh Pandey, CEO of edu-tech company Physics Wallah, was quoted as saying by multiple media platforms.

A large number of medical aspirants from across the country have also complained that certain candidates scored marks that are mathematically impossible. (SEE PAGE 2)

Ramoji Rao critical, on ventilator

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Enadu Group chairman Ramoji Rao is in a critical condition and on ventilator support at Star Hospitals in Nanakramguda.

Ramoji Rao's health condition worsened at around 3 pm on Friday and his close associates rushed him to the hospital for treatment. According to reports, he recently had a heart episode and received a stent after undergoing a heart procedure.

In the last few years, Rao, due to his age, had been struggling with several health complications and made multiple visits to hospitals for treatment for various kinds of ailments.

According to Star Hospitals doctors, he is under close observation and a clear picture of his recovery will emerge after a few hours of intensive care treatment. The hospital is expected to release a health bulletin.

Breezy, cloudy day brings respite for Hyderabad

CITY BUREAU
 Hyderabad

Hyderabad experienced delightful and breezy weather on Friday, marked by cloudy skies and isolated, scattered rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, in a few places by evening.

The pleasant weather is expected to continue overnight, with forecasts of heavier rains. During the day, Hyderabad recorded a maximum temperature of 33.3°C, which was 1.6°C lower than the previous day and 3.8°C below normal.

Relative humidity was recorded at 72 per cent, and the minimum temperature stood at 24°C. On Saturday, the city is likely to experi-



Dark clouds envelop Tank Bund as parts of Hyderabad saw scattered rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms on Friday.

ence light rains with thundershowers and a mostly cloudy sky.

Temperatures are expected to range between 32°C and 34°C over the next

48 hours, according to the weatherman. Meanwhile, in Telangana, heavy rains lashed Vikarabad, Narayanpet, and Rangareddy districts on Friday. (SEE PAGE 2)

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